

# **MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

## **JULY 16, 2007**

### **MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria**

**PRESENT:** Doug Sweet (Acting Chair), Jane Brown, Rob Caruso, Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, Linda Hiller, Rosemary Larking, Jeff Hutter, Barbara Lischinsky, Girard Plante, Jason Rosenberg,  
**REGRETS:** Herb Cole, Heather Platt, Janna Zwerner  
**STAFF:** Beverly Droz, Lowell Haynes  
**GUESTS:** Shirley Farnham, Margaret Doris

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The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm and was chaired by Douglas Sweet, Acting Chair.

Introductions were made and guests were welcomed. Shirley is a representative from the Council On Aging and Margaret is President of the Playground Project at Albermarle and is here to present on HP parking in that area.

**Minutes of 6/18/07 were accepted.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### **Citizen's Bank on Centre St.**

Since the MCPD meeting in June, Lowell had visited the bank and sent an email report to Committee members on June 27. He met with the manager, Mark Jurilla and discussed several problems, including:

- Automatic door openers: the rear entry has a pull pressure in excess of what's allowed and the front door pull pressure is border-line. They should take steps to adjust the doors.
- High tables: the manager showed him the pull-out section that creates a writing area for a person who is seated. There is no signage indicating it exists but the manager has ordered them.
- Accessible teller window: the manager said they have assigned a full-time teller to the accessible window.
- HP parking space in front of bank: the manager requested that we proceed to install a curb cut and move the HP parking space closer to the front entrance. Lowell has requested that of DPW. They may need 2 HP parking spaces there. They presently have 4 HP parking spaces in the rear lot.

Since this meeting, Rosemary has visited the bank and at the time of her visit a large chair was blocking the slide-out shelf in the lower counter. Lowell understood that this "lower counter" would be staffed at all times but Rosemary said that no one was staffing it on Saturdays. She waited for 15 minutes but the tellers couldn't see her. Lowell will contact the bank manager again.

##### **Café St. Petersburg (53-57 Union Street):**

Jason got a call from the owner of the restaurant to thank MCPD for its support. They're going to file an appeal with the Superior Court. Refer to the previous MCPD minutes for details but the Lease reads that the tenants are responsible for whatever accessible changes have to be made; the landlord is not responsible for this. Jason has offered to provide mediation and has left a message for the landlord. The bottom line is that we'll hear more.

##### **Unique Nails Salon:**

A letter was sent to the owner/manager about the threshold now being too high. Bev has not received any response. Bev will send John Lojek a copy of the letter and ask him to check on it.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Bank of America (corner of Centre & Beacon Sts.):**

Rosemary reported that as you enter and turn right, you can't get through the customer service door.

Rosemary didn't know if other customer service offices were accessible. There was a manager in the first office, so there was a discussion as to whether it was indeed an office for customer service. Regardless, the bank staff should come out and accommodate the customer. Rosemary will revisit the Bank.

### **Albemarle Rd. – HP Parking at Playground:**

The Committee welcomed Margaret Doris, who has been before the MCPD over the years. She explained that the Playground Project was founded in 1992 to have a universally designed playground. The Albemarle Playground was designed based on this concept, and so were 2 other playgrounds. She indicated that the Parks and Recreation department has not signed onto the concept, even though the costs are not much more.

Margaret said Newton meets ADA requirements but regulations are inadequate to cover newer disabilities. There was a discussion about the City following the law but not going beyond the letter of it. This is an opportunity for MCPD to interface with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Margaret explained various examples of how they've learned, via trial and error, to change both the supplies for and siting of equipment to make a playground more accessible. Now vendors are carrying many of the components her group introduced for other agencies to use.

For tonight's discussion, Lowell handed out a map of the Albemarle Road section showing the planned construction of the new curb cut near the gazebo. The "community classroom gazebo", a CPA funded project, is accessible. Margaret pointed out that there was a need for 2 HP spaces between the Gath Pool and the Horace Mann School. Their plan included these 2 spaces but since no one got approval from the Traffic Council and the Board of Aldermen, it didn't get done..

The **MOTION** was made to ask the Traffic Council to make the 2 HP spaces and curb cuts as indicated. After the following discussion the motion was approved.

Lowell handed out his own map that documents the slopes needed in the new concrete walkway to accommodate the curb ramp. He said this map should go to DPW since they will do the work. Lowell mentioned that there aren't any curb cuts on the other side. There isn't a sidewalk near the Brook but there is an inaccessible bridge over Cheesecake Brook.

Margaret informed the Committee that the bridge is designated by Homeland Security as an evacuation route from Day Middle School to Fessenden Field. But it is not accessible. There was further discussion about the absurdity of the evacuation route.

### **CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT for July by Lowell**

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Any discussion that took place at the meeting, other than Lowell's reading of the report, is noted below each appropriate bullet item and will start with the words "It was noted".

- Police Headquarters Annex Access Ramp (Project CD0203A. Expended, \$251,693; Budget balance, \$1,157; Building Dept. budget, \$66,600) – The concrete ramp is complete. There is a problem with the handrails, because some of the joints are rough. This problem should be addressed soon. *The project is almost ready for a final inspection.*
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$19,813) – In keeping with the vote of the Committee, we have ordered the installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian

signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot Streets, Beacon and Chestnut Streets, and Adams and Watertown Streets. I estimate hardware costs for each of these three intersections at \$1,400. We have also ordered Polara Navigator signals at Washington Street and Commonwealth Avenue. I estimate hardware costs for this intersection at \$9,000. We are attempting to communicate with the Traffic Engineer to improve the pedestrian crossing at Centre Street @ Centre Ave. Our hope is to have independent crossing signals for the two streets and straighten the crosswalk across Centre Street. We've requested regular APS-10 pedestrian signals, but this intersection would be an excellent location for the Polara Navigator signals because of ambient sound control and beaconing capabilities. I estimate the hardware cost for this intersection between \$1,400 and \$3,000. *I have received a communication that indicates the City may not be able to pay for installation costs in the coming year. I am investigating. (Expected Date of Completion: summer 2008.)*

- Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$10,000) – *No change.* Our project is an asphalt walkway to provide an accessible route from the park entrance to some benches and to the basketball and tennis courts. DPW will do the work. The work has been delayed because of disagreement among residents regarding the location of additional walkways through the park that are to be funded by the City's CPA budget. *(EDC: October 2007)*
- Ware's Cove Accessible Connector Path (Project CD0403A) This project is now complete. The Department of Public Works recently added compacted stone dust where drainage problems had been detected.  
*It was noted that several areas had erosion from rain so the DPW needed to compact it and add some more stone dust. Lucie was concerned that there are so many paths and that this is confusing and that there maybe a need for signage. She also said that there are only 2 HP spaces. She saw two vans pull up and only 1 could park and unload. They need to be repainted and striped appropriately. Jason said it also needs HP signs on the fence. Linda also suggested a HP space at the corner of the lot since it would automatically be in line for the accessible walkway. Lowell has a request into Clint Schuckle to re-stripe the HP spaces at Auburndale Park at W. Pine Street. He will take Committee recommendations into account and pass on specifications for locations and signage for the spaces. He feels that at least 3 HP spaces with one van space are needed.*
- Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$3,000) – *No change.* The current budget will be limited to installation of benches at Wellington Park when our construction of walkways in the park is completed. *(EDC: October 2007)*
- Curb Cuts (Projects CD0703D and CD0803G. Expended, \$37,482; Budget balance: \$156,747) – The Dept. of Public Works will hire a dedicated crew in by the beginning of August for CDBG projects, primarily curb cuts. We have submitted specific requests for 64 curb cuts. Many of the locations are on Woodland Road from Hancock Street to Windermere Road. We are still expanding our list of curb cuts to be done in 2007. Mayor's Committee members are still encouraged to report priority locations for needed curb cuts. *(Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.)*
- Public Facilities and Parks Access (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$67,293) – The first project under this budget is the *construction of the accessible walkway from the Mason-Rice School parking lot to the planned accessible play area within the Newton Centre Playground.* The project will be managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and carried out by the Department of Public Works. Work should begin in July or August.  
The second part of this project is the *re-construction of two sets of stairs in Burr Park* by the Department of Public Works and the installation of railings on all three sets of stairs in the park. *The reconstruction of the stairs is complete and railings are scheduled to be installed by July 23.* In response to our request for project applications from City departments, the Department of Parks and Recreation has announced that upgrading of the Newton Highlands Playground and Upper Falls

Playground is being planned and they will request funds for accessibility improvements. (EDC: October 2007)

*Additionally Doug brought up the continuous problem at the courthouse. The HP signs are the responsibility of the court and the court should remove the second sign. It was not clear how we can help this situation. Lowell reported that the railing at the Police annex is very rough. Once it is fixed he can plan the ribbon cutting ceremony.*

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **Hammond Pond Parkway Condos**

Bev reported that the elevators at each condo building at 2, 10, and 20 Hammond Pond Parkway will be shut down for a 14 week period for repair, starting perhaps in September. These condo buildings are 6 stories high and contain a majority of senior residents. She has sent emails of inquiry to our Fire and Police departments and a message into Fair Housing Accessibility First group (recommended to me by ADA Technical Assistance). She has spoken with staff at MOD, and AAB says they have no jurisdiction as long as the elevators are covered by Mass Law. She is in contact with other staff such as John Lojek (Inspectional Services), Jayne Colino (Senior Services), the Mayor's office, and her boss David Naparstek (Health Dept.) in an effort to best be prepared for Jason is putting in an inquiry into the Greater Boston Real Estate group

Jason has been making contacts to see what other building owners have done. Suggestions include:

- Require elevator company to operate 2 shifts a day to shorten length of time that elevator is unavailable.
- Have a window of time when the elevator is operable if possible, and it may not be.
- Have contact with an EMT service to be on site in case they're needed.
- Many other suggestions such as runner to take groceries, laundry, prescriptions etc.

Bev and Jason explained that they have talked to many resources and agencies to get advice and expect to be meeting with representatives of the condo association during the summer.

### **Wellington Park**

Lowell brought in a drawing of Wellington Park. He reminded MCPD that we set aside \$10K to pay for the Asphalt walkway to provide an accessible route from Kilbourne Street to Princess Street. It has taken a year to agree to the location of the path because they were determining where to site the stone dust path funded by the CPA.

### **Fair Housing**

In Janna's absence tonight, Lowell reported on a meeting this morning with the Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF) members: Henry Korman FHTF Chair, Phil Herr, Janna Zwerner – representative from MCPD for the Discrimination Audit sub-committee. Planning and Development Staff present included: Steve Gartrell, Amy Yuhasz, Lowell Haynes and Margaret Siciliano. The meeting was about the discrimination audit of existing housing stock. Henry reported that it was brought to the Mayor but the Mayor was concerned it would show deficiencies within departments. So now they're discussing a more "first-step" plan to bring involved departments together to go through an educational seminar on codes, ADA and fair housing laws, plus other information from Adaptive Environments.

### **Arborpoint at Woodland Station**

Girard reported that the apartments at Arborpoint at Woodland Station are not yet available to be seen or moved into. Work such as new sidewalks, landscaping, and general outdoor work continues. National Development is the company developing the apartment complex and they say the date for starting leases is August, but Girard's observations are that any moving in would occur in September.

**Curb cuts in Lasell College area**

Girard reported that curb cuts on the corner of Windermere Road and Woodland Road in Auburndale began last week. He said the entire curb cut and sidewalk restoration is an enormous initiative, and much needed. There is urgency to this particular project because of the tragic death of the 21-year-old Lasell College student killed after being hit by a car last fall on Woodland Road in the area designated as part of the project.

**HP Parking at Walgreen's Store in Newton Centre**

Barbara reported on the HP parking at Walgreen's on Langley Road. They tried to pull into the HP space but this space was blocked by a vehicle. She's talked to the manager of the store but he hasn't done anything. There are no signs in the no-parking area and the HP sign was knocked over during the snow season. There was a discussion of whether it is private or public property. Rob enters from Lyman Road in the back of the lot. He reported that the Walgreen's at 4-Corners (corner of Beacon and Walnut Streets) was prompt in replacing the HP signs and striping when he brought it to their attention. Doug suggested that a letter be sent by the Committee to the Manager in Newton Center.

**Inspectional Services Department**

Jason reported on his meeting with John Lojek. Inspectional Services Department has just hired someone who will do access code enforcement. Lojek stated that he used to do it in Brookline but since he left no one has replaced him there. Inspectional Services Department's hiring of a person who will enforce zoning, building code and access will provide the MCPD with more assistance. But Jason noted this is not a "design" person but more of a "violations" person. We may want to invite Lojek and the new person to our October meeting.

**Motion to adjourn at 9:05 pm.**

**The next meeting will be September 17 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.**